DRAWINGS of MUCHA

70 Works by
Alphonse Maria
Mucha

Including 9 in Full Color

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"Komenskg." 1910.

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ALPHONSE MARIA MUCHA

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The general outlines of Mucha's career are well known by now. Born in 1860 in the Moravian area of what is now Czechoslovakia, he displayed considerable artistic skill while still a child. His local instruction and his early commissions for noble patrons confirmed his ecclesiastical and feudal-romantic bent. His quest for formal training took him to Munich (1885), where he was molded by the solid academic tradition of draftsmanship and by the fashion for flamboyant allegory, and to Paris (1887), where the stipend from his patron came to an end and he was compelled to do illustration and other commercial art work for a living. Everyone knows how Sarah Bernhardt's commission for a poster in December 1894 proved to be the turning point in Mucha's career-although the Gismonda poster did not, as is often stated, represent a totally new phase in his art, the main lines of which remain remarkably consistent throughout his life.

From 1895 to 1904 Mucha not only continued to work for Bernhardt, but was also one of the most fashionable designers in Paris, swamped with orders for advertising art, illustrations, designs of ornamental objects and even buildings, and also for purely decorative pictures-the so-called panneaux decoratifs.' In that era of hothouse woman-worship, his dreamy but full-blooded female figures-an unnerving amalgam of Slavic peasant girl and the Queen of Heaven-successfully challenged the earlier modes of Eugene Grasset's pallid stained-glass damozels and Jules Cheret's frisky playgirls. Moreover, Mucha's ingrained predilection for Baroque curves and swirls, together with his taste for nearexcessive patterning and ornamentation, and for obsessively hieratic repetition-rows of similar flowers or insects succeeding one another in a picture border as saints are successively invoked in a litany-made him one of the archpriests of the Art Nouveau cult of those years.

In 1904 Mucha made the first of his six trips to the United States, where he painted and lectured. It was a New York industrialist who financed The Slav Epic, a cycle of twenty historical paintings on which the artist worked until 1930. Always a serious painter at heart, Mucha could now settle down in Czechoslovakia and work for himself and his nation as he saw fit. His Slavic cycle was more appreciated at home than in Western Europe and America, because tastes in art were no longer favorable to the academic tradition to which the artist still adhered. Mucha died in 1939.

Whereas the products of Mucha's Parisian period, especially his great posters, are now often seen, though usually in indifferent reproductions, his original drawings, done in a variety of media, are not yet as widely known as they deserve to be. Naturally, many of them are interesting because they reveal the first, or intermediate, thoughts for famous printed or painted works. But more basically than this, they show that his draftsmanshiphighly admired by even such a difficult connoisseur as his contemporary Whistler-was the firm and brilliant underpinning of his entire craft. Moreover, it should be recalled that the actual posters and panneaux decoratifs were printed by others, professional lithographers, from Mucha's instructions and that after the first couple of years of his immense popularity he was simply too busy to supervise the printing personally; on top of this, his own printers at the time-like so many today--disseminated reduced, imperfect copies of his printed works which traduced the real quality of his art. These considerations make the original drawings essential for the proper evaluation of Mucha's standing.

It is fortunate that the drawings in the present volume represent so many areas and high spots of Mucha's activity. After a pre-Bernhardt Paris illustration (page 1), we find several works done for the Divine Sarah (pages 4, 5, 11, 28); a wide variety of advertising and packaging art for many different products; many sketches for panneaux decoratifs; important book and magazine illustrations, especially one for the 1897 Ilsee (page 17), a book justly regarded as a summa of Mucha's decorative art and a precursor of the numerous Art Nouveau style books; studies (pages 37, 40, 41, 51) for Mucha's two major portfolios of ideas for artists, the Documents decoratifs of 1901 and the Figures decoratives of 1905; a sample of commercial work done on a trip to the United States (page 54); and some of the late work, including two sketches for a Slav Epic painting (page 57) and a watercolor of 1936 (page 56).

In regard to pictorial structure and iconography, the present selection exemplifies such basic traits of Mucha's art as the overwhelming importance of the circle, both as an underlying structural element (pages 26 and 35) and as a part of the finished composition, where it often serves as a halo (pages 11, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 30, 34, 39, 43, 49); the predilection for arched tops (frontispiece, pages 22, 25, 42, 55, 56 and the first color page); his skill with border elements (page 39 and the first color page); his use of folk embroidery motifs (pages 13, 26, 27), six-pointed stars (6, 11, 15, 19, 30) and what was called "macaroni hair" (11, 13, 15, 17); his mysterious female giants, both Virgin Mary

and Earth Mother (6, 17, 30, 33); and his dark Catholicism, mixed with Masonic and Rosicrucian beliefs (6, 8, 19 and the seventh color page).

An insight into the artist's working habits and into the painstaking preparation of his pictures is afforded in this book by the inclusion in several instances of more than one stage in the genesis of a given work. Thus, we have both a charcoal contour sketch (page 7) and the finished tempera color sketch (fifth color page) for the panneau "Autumn"; a charcoal and pencil study for the lithograph "Salammbo" (page 14) alongside a printed proof (page 15) of the black-and-white contours which the artist has colored in by hand as a guide to the color printing; the drawing for the panneau "Ivy" alongside the printed panneau (pages 38 and 39); two stages in the work on a cover for the magazine L'Habitation pratique (pages 48 and 49); and an early sketch for the St. Louis World's Fair poster .(page 53) in addition to the completed poster (last color page).'

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The dimensions are expressed in inches, height before width. The color section follows page 18.

COLOR

Girl in a grainfield with field flowers. Panneau lithographed on silk. Late 1890s. 271/2 x 12.

Preliminary drawings in color for The Seasons, a set of panneaux decoratifs. Tempera. 1896. "Winter": 391/2 x 201/4. "Spring": 391/4 x 20. "Summer": 39%2 x 20. "Autumn": 391/2 x 20. Compare the earlier charcoal sketch for "Autumn" on page 7.

Two sketches for Lefevre-Utile biscuit boxes with scenes of Naples and Venice. 1897. Watercolor and gold. Each 51/ x 81/8. Another Lefevre-Utile sketch appears on page 20.

Drawing for the Thanksgiving cover of Collier's magazine, 1922. Watercolor and gold. 16 x 111/2.

Poster for the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904. Lithograph, printed by F. Champenois. 1903. 411/2 x 301/2. Translation: "Universal and International Exposition at St. Louis (United States) from April 30 to November 30, 1904. From Paris to St. Louis, 6 days by ship and 1 day by train. Area of the fairgrounds ... [statistics follow]." Compare the pencil sketch for this poster on page 53.

BLACK AND WHITE

"Komenský." Watercolor and ink. 1910. 25⅜ x 18½. *Frontispiece*

Prostitute apprehended by a policeman. Drawing for a book illustration. Watercolor and gouache. 1893. 13 x 91/2. 1

Portrait of a lady in a hat. Pencil. 1896. 18 x 131/2. 2

Girl in an armchair. Pencil. 1896. 18 x 111/2. 3

Sarah Bernhardt. India ink. 1896. 15 x 71/4. 4

Sarah Bernhardt wearing a tiara. Pencil. 1896. 11 x 10. 5

Sketch for an illustration in Le Rat. Pencil. 1896. 21 x 141/ . 6

Sketch for the panneau decoratif "Autumn," from The Seasons. Charcoal. 1896. 40%2 x 208/4. A subsequent preliminary drawing of this subject appears in the color section. 7

Drawing for a Benedictine liqueur poster. Watercolor. 1896. 11Y2 x 63/4. 8

Standing woman. Watercolor. Late 1890s. 181/2 x 12. 9

"In the Foyer of the Comedie Francaise." India ink and pencil. By 1897. 171/4 x 13. 10

Poster for La Plume magazine. Lithograph, printed by F. Champenois. 1896. 25%2 x 16. Translation: "The December 15 issue of La Plume [The Pen] will feature an article on Sarah Bernhardt." 11

Page's costume. Illustration for a book on theatrical costume. Watercolor. 1897. 11 x 5. 12

Poster for Mucha's one-man show at the Salon des Cent. Lithograph, printed by F. Champenois. 1897. 251/ x 173/4. 13

Study for the print "Salammbo" (inspired by Gustave Flaubert's novel set in ancient Carthage). Charcoal and pencil. 1897. 151/4 x 91/2. 14

"Salammbo," a print made for the May 1897 issue of L'Estampe moderne. Lithograph, hand-colored. 143/4 x 83/4. 15

Drawing for a menu. India ink. 1897. 61/2 x 41/2. 16

Sketch for an illustration in Ilsee, Princesse de Tripoli by Robert de Flers, published 1897. Pencil and charcoal. 83/4 x 7. In the book, this is the large introductory illustration to the third and last part, in which the young French knight Jaufre Rudel finally meets the princess whom he had seen in a vision. 17

Profile of a woman wearing jewelry. Pencil. 1898. Diameter 10. 18

Sketch for a carte-souvenir for the Queen of Naples in memory of the Late King, who is depicted in the presence of Christ. Pencil. 1897. 15V2 x 11V2. Francis II, last ruler of the Kingdom of Naples, was deposed in 1861 and died in 1894. 19

Sketch for an advertising card for the photographer Bary. Pencil and india ink. 1899. 5 x 4. 20

Sketch for a Lefevre-Utile biscuit box. Watercolor and gold. 1897. 41/2 x 8. Two more Lefevre-Utile sketches appear in the color section. 20

Cover sketch for the first issue (January 1899) of the magazine Le Mois (The Month). Pencil. 1898. 133/8 x 9. 21

Cover sketch for the magazine L'Age d'Art. Pencil. 1898. 13 x 71/2. 22

Cover sketch for the Czech magazine Zlatk Praha (Golden Prague). Pencil and charcoal. 1890s. 20 x 15. 23

Woman with a billiard cue. Pencil. 1899. 163/4 x 103/4. Inscribed: "Par amit[i]e a Monsieur Schenk Paris, 17/1/99." . . . 24

Sketch for the cover of the book Le Roi des jongleurs (The King of the Tumblers) by Albert Robida, published 1898 and illustrated by Robida. Watercolor and gold. 121/2 x 188/4 . 25

Girl in costume with a beverage tray. Study for a poster. Pencil. 1899. 25 x 91/2. 26

Sketch for a calendar. Pencil. 1898. 248/4 x 188/4. 27

Mother, child and birds. Sketch for the program of a charity performance by Sarah Bernhardt. Pencil. 1899. 6%4 x 8. 28

Girl in an armchair. Pencil. 1899. 13 x 10. 29

Sketch for the illustrated edition of the Lord's Prayer, Le Pater. Pencil. 1899. 11x111/2. 30

Girl under a lampshade. Advertisement for "Luciline." Late 1890s. 11 x 71/2. 31

Sketch for a poster. Pencil. 1900. 15 x 158/4. 32

Illustration for the book Clio by Anatole France, a collection of four historical tales published in 1900. India ink and pencil. 1899. 81/4 x 63/4. The drawing, reproduced much smaller in the book, accompanies the story "La Muiron"; this is the name of the vessel on which Napoleon returns to France in 1799 from his Egyptian campaign; the text chiefly contains philosophical discussions about his destiny. 33

Seated girl. Sketch for a calendar. Pencil. 1900. 88/4 x 91/2. 34

Girl with flowers. Study for a panneau decoratif. Pencil. 1900. 211/2 x 16. 35

Sketch for a menu. Pencil and watercolor. 1900. 81/2 x 51/2. 36

Study for a plate in the portfolio Documents decoratifs, published 1901. Pencil. 1900. 178/4 x 12%2. Mucha reused

this subject for other purposes, and other poses of the same model and bearskin rug appear in the 1905 portfolio Figures decoratives. 37

Study for the panneau decoratif "Ivy" (part of a series of plants). Pencil and watercolor. 1901. 13 x 13. 38

"Ivy," a panneau decoratif. Lithograph. 1901. 241/2 x 19. 39

Study for a plate of alphabets and ornaments in the portfolio Documents decoratifs.

Pencil. 1901. 15V2 x 111/2. 40

Study for a plate of lace motifs in Documents decoratifs. Gouache. 1901. 178/4 x 12. 41

Sketch for the bookplate of Freund-Deschamps. Pencil and watercolor. 1900. 145/4 x 10. Freund-Deschamps was a paint manufacturer at whose country home, near Bar-le-Duc, Mucha sometimes stayed. 42

Sketch for a poster advertising the "Rodo" perfume sprayer. Pencil. 1901. 17 x 12. 43

Sleeping boy. Charcoal. Undated. 6 x 8. 44

Head of a man. Charcoal. Undated. 10 x 8. 45

Studies of drapery. Blue and red crayon. 1902. 20 x 14. 46

Study of a young woman. Black crayon with white highlights. Undated. 18 x 12. 47

Cover sketch for the magazine L'Habitation pratique (The Practical Dwelling). Pencil. 1903. 15 x 14%2. 48

Finished drawing for the cover of L'Habitation pratique. India ink. 1903. 228/8 x 18%. 49

Sketch for a menu reproduced in the magazine Cocorico. Pencil and watercolor. 1903. 9 x 61/4. 50

Finished drawing for a plate in the portfolio Figures decoratives, published 1905. Pencil with white highlights. 1901. 18 x 13. 51

Two sketches for illustrations in the book Au Son des cloches de Noel et de P&ques (At the Sound of the Christmas and Easter Bells) by E. Guebhardt. Pencil on linen. 1901. 23/4 x 51/4 and 31/2 x 6. 52

Girl and Indian. Study for the St. Louis World's Fair poster. Pencil and ink on linen. 1903. 33 x 241/2. The printed poster appears in the color section. 53

Study for a corset poster. Pencil. 1909. 11 x 6. 54

Two young women in costume. Sketch for a panneau decoratif. Pencil. 1909. 11 x 7. 55

Sketch for the publication Le Quartier Latin; IVme Partie; Troisieme Republique (The Latin Quarter; Part IV; Third Republic). Watercolor. 1936. 103/4 x 81/2. 56

Two sketches for a historical painting, in the Slav Epic cycle, depicting the coronation procession of the fourteenth-century Serbian king Stephen Dushan (painting completed by 1925). Pen and colored pencils. 51/4 x 63/4 and 51/2 x 75/8. 57

DRAWINGS OF MUCHA

Prostitute apprehended by a policeman. Drawing for a book illustration. 1893.

Portrait of a lady in a hat. 1896.

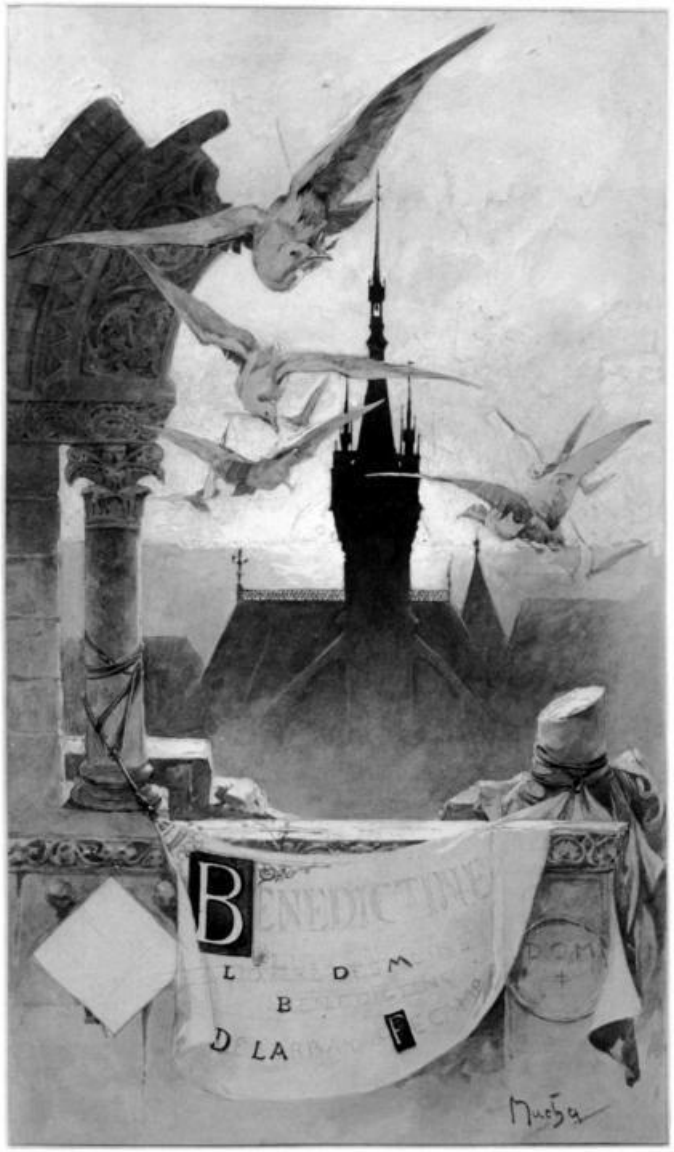
Girl in an armchair. 1896.

Sarah Bernhardt. 1896.

Sarah Bernhardt wearing a tiara. 1896.

Sketch for an illustration in Le Rat. 1896.

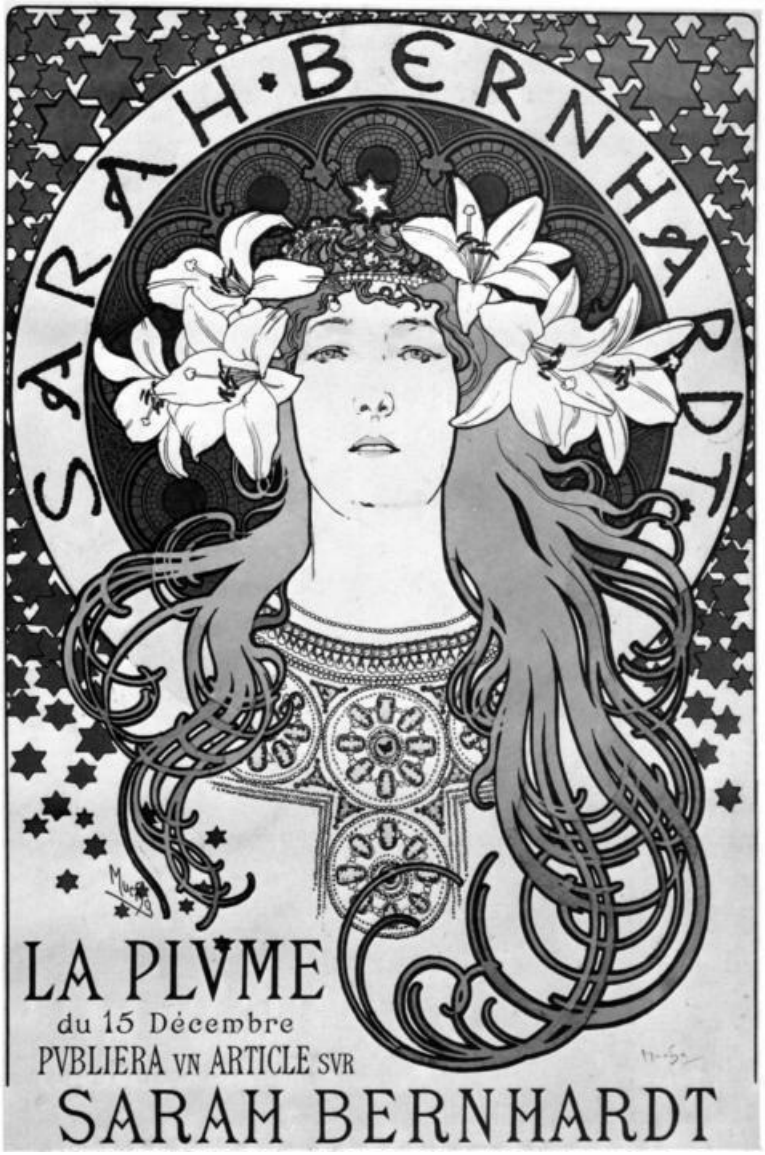
Sketch for the panneau "Autumn," from The Seasons. 1896.



Drawing for a Benedictine liqueur poster. 1896.

Standing woman. Late 1890s.

"In the Foyer of the Comedie Francaise." By 1897.



Lithographed poster for La Plume magazine's article on Sarah Bernhardt. 1896.

Page's costume for a book on theatrical costumes. 1897.

Lithographed poster for Mucha's show at the Salon des Cent. 1897.

Study for the print "Salammbo." 1897.

Hand-colored impression of the print "Salammbo." 1897.

Drawing for a menu. 1897.

Sketch for an illustration in the book Ilsee, Princesse de Tripoli. 1897.

Profile of a woman wearing jewelry. 1898.

Girl in a grainfield with field flowers. Panneau lithographed. Late 1890s.

Preliminary drawing for the panneau "Winter," from The Seasons. 1896.

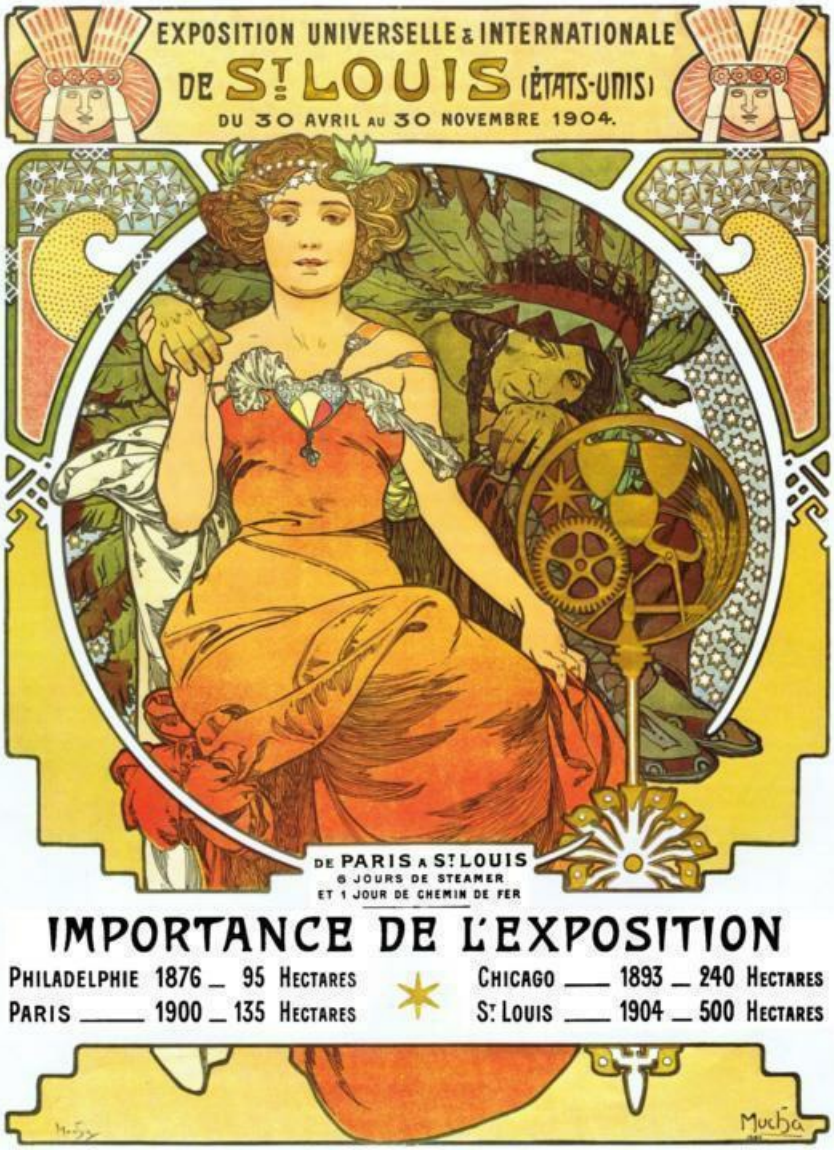
Preliminary drawing for the panneau "Spring," from The Seasons. 1896.

Preliminary drawing for the panneau decoratif "Summer," from The Seasons. 1896.

Preliminary drawing for the panneau decoratif "Autumn," from The Seasons. 1896.

Sketches for Lefevre-Utile biscuit boxes with scenes of Naples and Venice. 1897.

Drawing for the Thanksgiving cover of Collier's magazine, 1922.


EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE & INTERNATIONALE
DE St LOUIS (ÉTATS-UNIS)
DU 30 AVRIL AU 30 NOVEMBRE 1904.
DE PARIS A St LOUIS
6 JOURS DE STEAMER
ET 1 JOUR DE CHEMIN DE FER
IMPORTANCE DE L'EXPOSITION
PHILADELPHIE 1876 _ 95 HECTARES
PARIS ____ 1900 _ 135 HECTARES
CHICAGO ____ 1893 _ 240 HECTARES
St LOUIS ____ 1904 _ 500 HECTARES
Mucha

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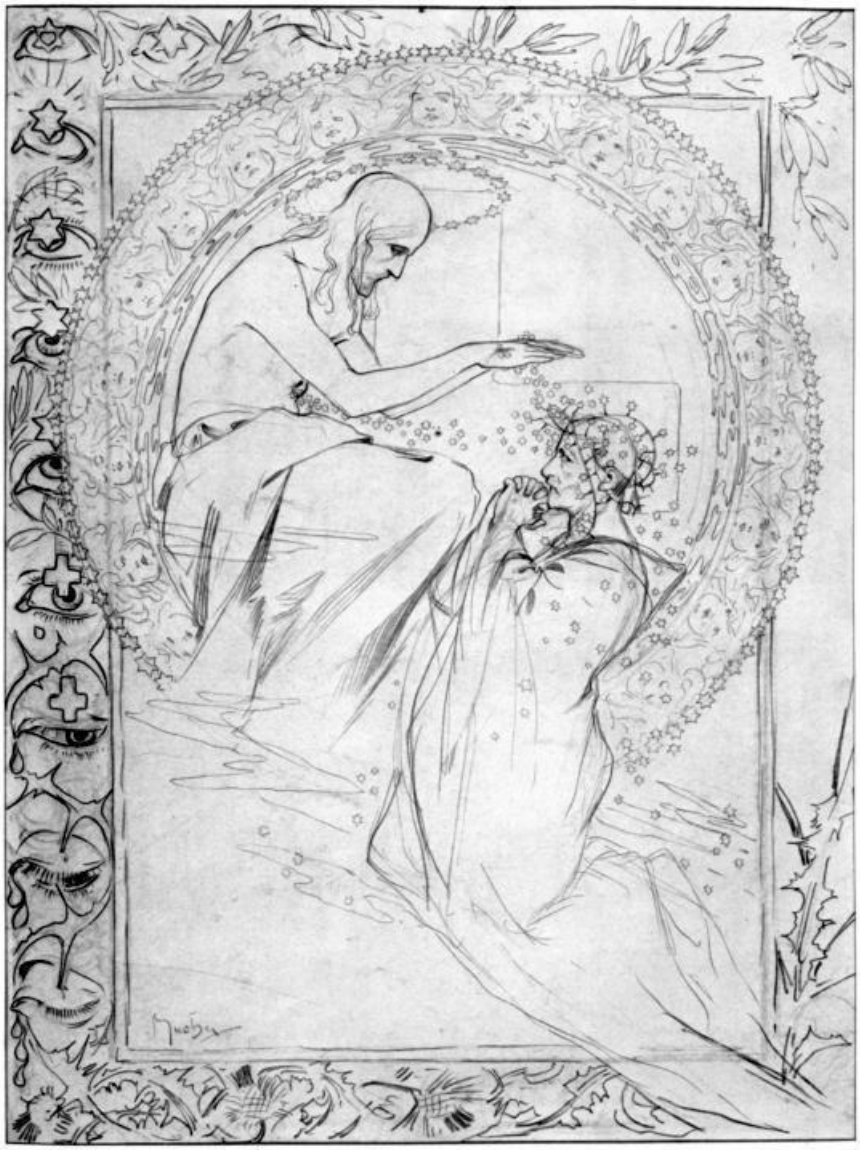
voster for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. 1903.



Sketch for a carte-souvenir in memory of the late King of Naples. 1897.

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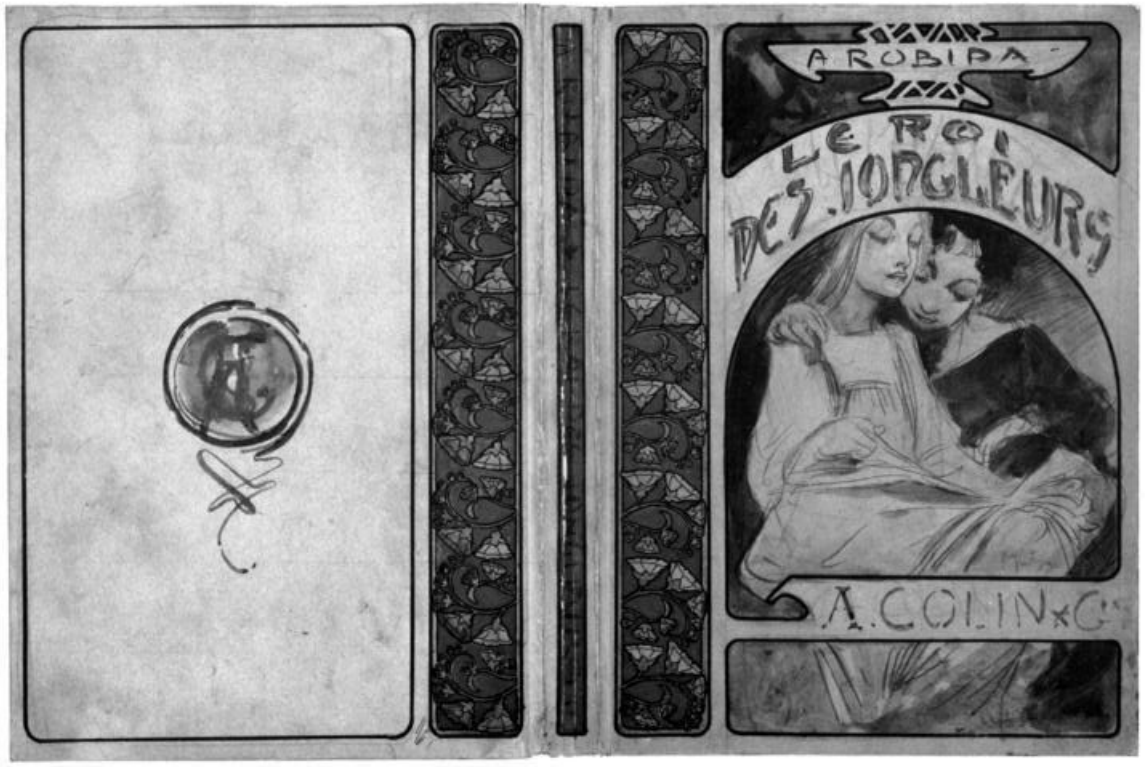
Cover sketch for the magazine Zlatk Praha. 1890s.

Woman with a billiard cue. 1899.



Cover sketch for the book *Le Roi des jongleurs*. 1898.

Girl with a tray. Study for a poster. 1899.

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Girl in an armchair. 1899.

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Sketch for a poster. 1900.

Illustration for the book Clio. 1899.

Sketch for a calendar. 1900.

Study for a panneau decoratif. 1900.

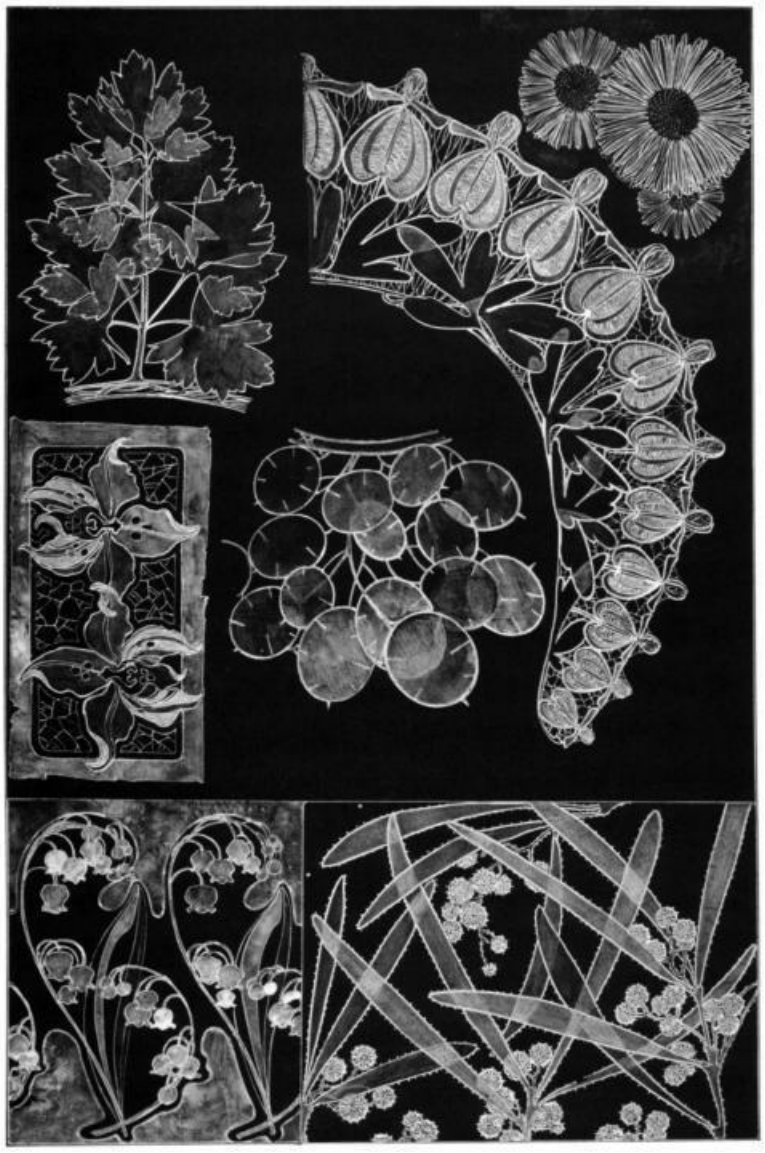
Sketch for a menu. 1900.

Study for a plate in the portfolio Documents decoratifs. 1900.

Study for the panneau decorati f "Ivy." 1901.

"Ivy." The lithographed panneau decoratif. 1901.

Study for a plate in the portfolio Documents 1901.



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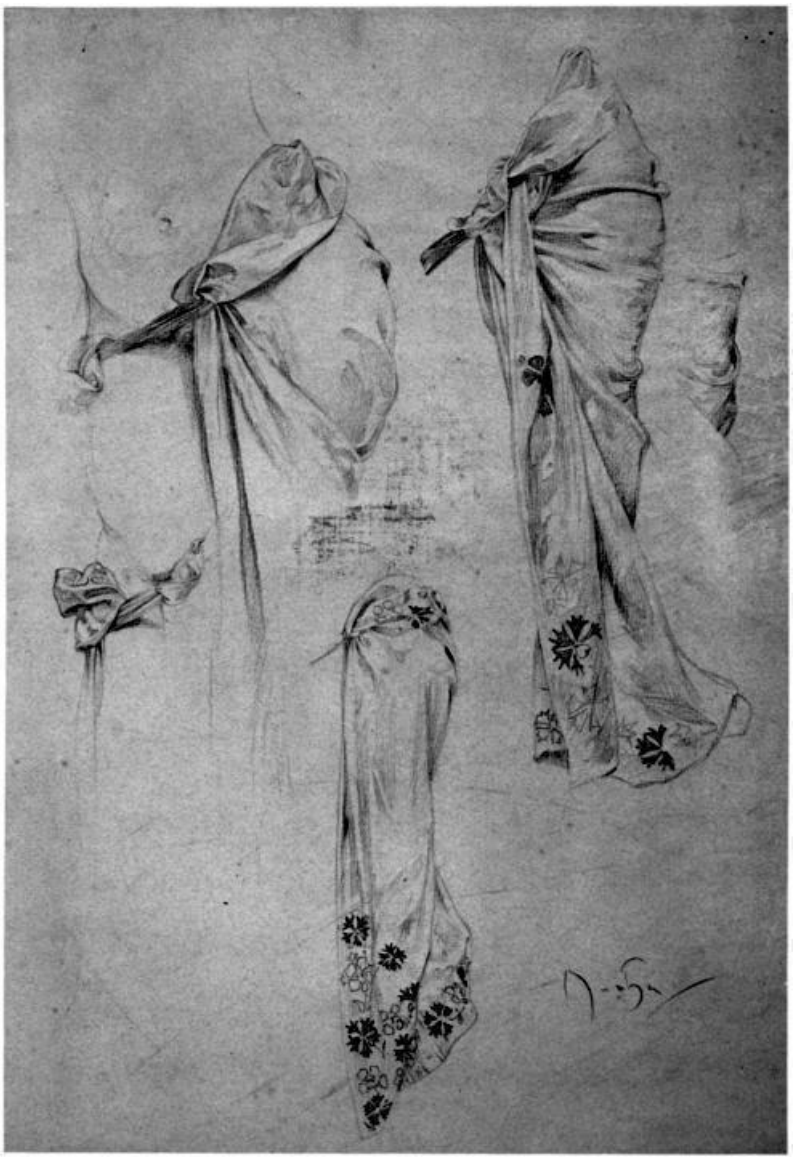

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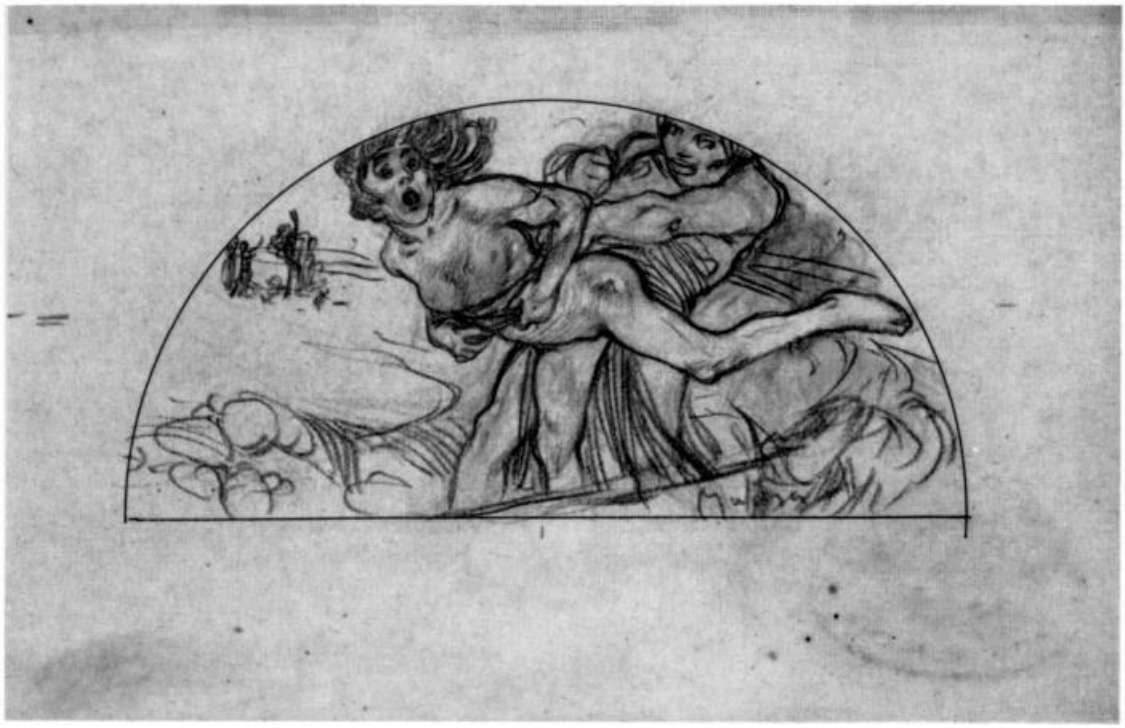
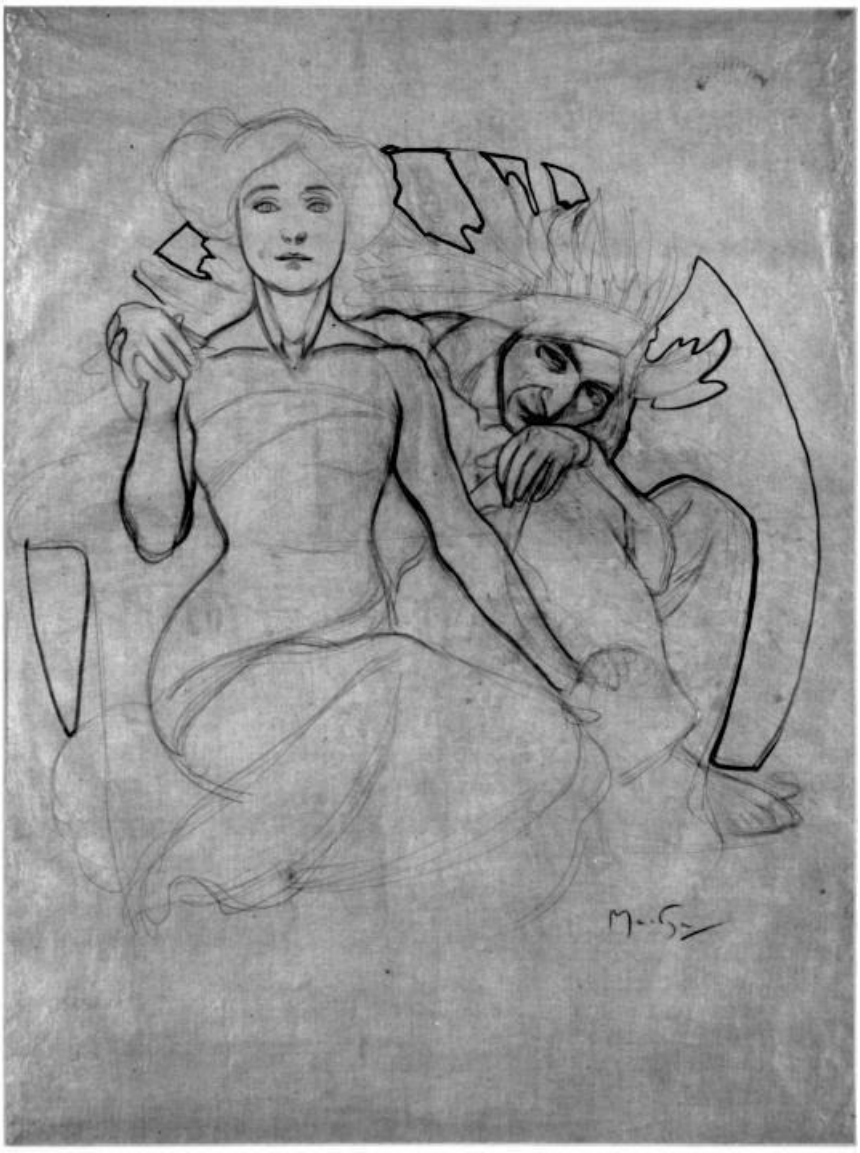


Two sketches for illustrations in the book Au Son des cloches de Noel et de Paques. 1901.



Study for the St. Louis World's Fair poster. 1903.

Study for a corset poster. 1909.

Sketch for a panneau decoratif. 1909.

Sketch for the publication Le Quartier latin. 1936.

Two sketches for the painting The Coronation of Dushan. By 1925.

1 These pictures of girls and plants, which have been described as posters without an advertising text, were lithographed on heavy paper or silk and were hung on walls or used as screens.

2 In order to allow such comparisons, and in order to illustrate three other outstanding pieces, we have included six items in this volume that are printed matter rather than drawings: pages 11, 13, 15, 39 and the first and last color pages.